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MEDIA ADVISORY FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Case of Equine Infectious Anemia Found in Chino Valley

(Phoenix) -- A single case of Equine Infectious Anemia has been discovered in Chino Valley and the owner is now ready to euthanize the animal to prevent further spread. This disease is a contagious viral disease of horses (formerly called "Swamp Fever") and is typically carried between horses through a mosquito, or other blood sucking bugs, thus the name "Swamp Fever". This is not the only way it may be carried. Using the "same needle" when injecting, or obtaining blood samples from horses can also cause the spread.

What are the symptoms?

Often, no symptoms are present. However, you may notice the following:

- Fever—An infected horse's temperature may rise suddenly to about 105 °F or, rarely, as high as 108 °F. Then it may drop back to normal for an indeterminate period until the onset of another episode.
- Depression—The horse appears more or less dejected (head hangs low) and generally listless.
- Weight loss—The horse may refuse feed or may eat an inordinate amount but still continues on an obvious decline from normal weight.
- Dependent edema—The horse may develop swelling, which is evidence of fluid collecting under the skin in the legs and under the chest and other underbody surfaces.
- Anemia—The horse's blood may experience a marked drop in its red corpuscle count and appear thin and watery. The animal may also have an irregular heartbeat, and a jugular pulse may become evident.

Will there always be symptoms?

Some "healthy carriers" never exhibit symptoms. These are the treacherous individuals who harbor the disease, presenting a constant reservoir of infection and never showing symptoms. Others will have a "recurring" fever and anemia at various intervals and may live on for years. Those who show symptoms and are diagnosed are a threat to all other horses, mules and burros (any equine) and should immediately be removed from the population. ***If you think your horse has been exposed, have it tested because symptoms may not always be present!***

Is there a vaccine?

There is no vaccine or treatment for the disease.

What tests are available to tell if my horse has this disease?

Several official tests exist, all of which fall under the category of tests commonly called the “Coggins” tests, which every state insists on before accepting horses into their respective states. The difficulty in total eradication is horses who don’t cross a state line are not subject to testing. This means the disease may exist unnoticed in the animal if the animal has never crossed state lines because it would never have had to undergo the test for the disease. However, the insects carrying the disease do not understand the idea of borders.

Does Arizona require the animal be put down if it tests positive for this disease?

Arizona does not require a positive animal be euthanized, but the option is a lifetime spent distanced from all other horses in a mosquito proof facility, which is usually considered impractical.

What do horse owners need to know and do?

Horse owners can take a number of precautions to reduce the risk of infection:

- Use disposable syringes and needles. Follow the rule of one horse—one needle.
- Clean and sterilize all instruments thoroughly after each use.
- Keep stables and immediate facilities clean and sanitary. Remove manure and debris promptly, and ensure that the area is well drained.
- Implement insect controls. The local veterinarian or animal health official can provide information about approved insecticides and other insect-control measures. Avoid habitats favorable to insect survival.
- Do not intermingle infected and healthy animals. Do not breed EIAV-positive horses.
- Isolate all new horses, mules, and asses brought to the premises until they have been tested for EIA.
- Obtain the required certification of negative EIA test status for horse shows, county fairs, race tracks, and other places where many animals are brought together.

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